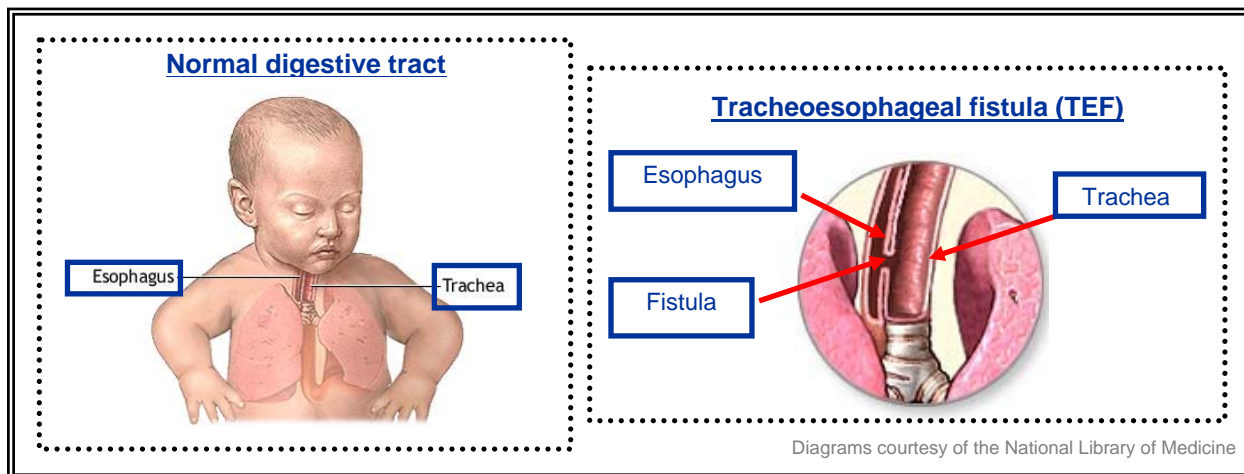


Esophageal Atresia

What is esophageal atresia?

Esophageal atresia (also called **tracheoesophageal fistula**) is a disorder of the digestive system in which the **esophagus** (tube from the mouth to the stomach) does not develop properly. As a result, the upper part of the esophagus does not connect with the lower esophagus and **stomach**.

For most children with esophageal atresia, the top end of the lower esophagus is connected with the **trachea** (windpipe). This **fistula** (connection or opening) between the lower esophagus and the trachea is called a **tracheoesophageal fistula** (TEF).



Approximately 30% of babies with this condition will have additional abnormalities, such as heart or gastrointestinal defects. Babies with esophageal atresia may have respiratory problems (such as difficulty breathing, infections, or choking) due to the baby breathing saliva into the lungs.

Approximately 1 out of every 4,000 babies are born with esophageal atresia each year. While esophageal atresia and TEF most commonly occur together, it is possible for a baby to have esophageal atresia without a TEF.

What causes esophageal atresia?

Currently, the exact cause of esophageal atresia is not known.

How is esophageal atresia treated?

Esophageal atresia is usually corrected with surgery. If a TEF is present, the portion of the esophagus with the TEF is removed, and the ends of the esophagus are reconnected. Your child's doctor(s) will discuss appropriate treatment options with you.

For more information

About.com Healthcare Encyclopedia - <http://adam.about.com/encyclopedia/infectiousdiseases/Esophageal-atresia.htm>

MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia - <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000961.htm>

Source: MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia